

BMDO's TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS PROGRAM



■ Silicon Designs, which developed a miniature accelerometer for guiding BMDO interceptors, presented its business plan at a TA review and received commercialization feedback and guidance from the review panel. Today, the company's device is being used in the air bag systems (pictured above) of millions of Ford and Chrysler automobiles.

The TA program plays an important role in BMDO technology transfer by encouraging the commercialization of BMDO-funded technologies and widening their exposure to industry and the public. The program is implemented as a cooperative effort between BMDO and the National Technology Transfer Center, which provides an experienced group of technology transfer specialists with expertise in technology assessment, technology commercialization, intellectual property, and outreach. The following sections discuss the TA program's technology assessment and commercialization services as well as its latest outreach products and World Wide Web site.

BUSINESS FOCUS WORKSHOPS

Business Focus Workshops (BFWs) help small businesses implement a high-technology commercialization strategy for their BMDO SBIR or STTR Phase I projects. These one-day meetings help entrepreneurs translate research excellence into salable products. In a typical workshop, an SBIR project leader is linked with a technology transfer agent and a business consultant. This team creates a "business case" briefing; the researchers then present their cases to a panel of consultants for advice and feedback.

The 1997 workshops involved 22 SBIR companies. After their meetings, more than half of the companies asked for further assistance with issues raised during the workshops. Nine of these interactions produced specific company actions. For example, on the basis of a recommendation from one of the consultants, one company is considering an outside candidate for the post of chief operating officer.

The TA program expects many successful interactions to result from the 1998 BFWs, which involved 27 SBIR and STTR businesses. It is currently surveying the businesses that attended these workshops while preparing for next year's BFWs.

TECHNOLOGY APPLICATIONS REVIEWS

TA reviews are catalysts for the commercialization of BMDO-funded technologies. At these reviews, research and development professionals present summaries of their technologies for commercialization. Reviewers from industry, government, and universities respond to the presentations with opinions on new applications, commercial strategies, and technology transfer opportunities. The researchers then use this expert advice to shape their businesses, potentially making them more profitable and commercially driven.

Since 1989, roughly 375 researchers have presented their commercialization strategies to panelists in more than 54 TA reviews. In 1998, the review process focused on space, medicine, photonics, manufacturing, and electronic materials technologies. In previous years, reviews have focused on energy, networks, nanotechnology, and intelligent transportation.

OUTREACH PUBLICATIONS

An important part of the TA program's mission is raising industry and public awareness of BMDO-funded technologies with high commercial potential. The developers of BMDO-funded technologies often lack the funds to publicize their achievements. When these technologies cannot attract industry's interest, many of them wind up collecting dust on laboratory shelves.

To help gain visibility for these technologies, the TA program produces several types of outreach publications. For example, to reach those who may want to use BMDO technology, the TA program publishes a quarterly newsletter called the *BMDO Update*. The newsletter is a major component of BMDO's technology push efforts, featuring BMDO innovations that already are being commercialized or that have potential commercial applications. With more than 26 issues and 465 stories published since 1991, the *BMDO Update* has received and responded to more than 18,000 requests for information.

The TA program also focuses on areas where BMDO-funded technologies have high commercial potential and could significantly improve a particular U.S. industry. To highlight these areas and technologies, it produces detailed applications reports. Recent reports include *BMDO Technology and the Electric Utility Industry*; *BMDO Technologies for Biomedical Applications*; *BMDO Technologies—Improving the Environment*; and *BMDO Fiber-Optic Technologies for Telecommunications*. The TA program also produces the *Technology Applications Reports*, which features the top commercial success stories emerging from BMDO research and development efforts.

WORLD WIDE WEB SITE

To share information quickly and affordably with a large audience, BMDO has developed a World Wide Web site called BMDOLINK (<http://www.acq.osd.mil/bmdo/bmdolink/html/bmdolink.html>). This site features a wide range of BMDO news and information, including fact sheets, media briefings, and congressional testimonies.

BMDOLINK also has a technology transfer section (<http://www.acq.osd.mil/bmdo/bmdolink/html/transfer.html>). Updated periodically, this section features background information on the TA program, a multimedia library, and commercialization success stories. It also contains online versions of several BMDO technology transfer publications, which can be either downloaded or viewed online.



■ The *Update* newsletter (pictured above) spreads the word about all types of BMDO-funded technology with high commercialization potential. Applications reports, however, are more focused. The latest report, *BMDO Technologies—Improving the Environment* (pictured above), speaks to the important ways that BMDO technology has a direct impact on the environment.

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